

# Protests spark new search for waste-transfer site

BY MAX ROSE  
ASSISTANT CITY EDITOR

When Rogers Road community members resolved to keep out a waste-transfer station, they knew it would take a team effort.

"We made a plea: Is there anyone out there who would be able to help?" said the Rev. Robert Campbell, a resident since 1973.

From that plea came the Rogers-Eubanks Coalition to End Environmental Racism, and four months after its formation, the Board of Commissioners reopened the site search process.

"I believe this coalition was the reason Orange County Commissioners decided to change their decision," Campbell said.

This round of the neighborhood's fight began in March, when the commissioners decided to put the transfer station at the current landfill, located in the Rogers Road community.

Neloa Jones and Barbara Hopkins sat on a county-created

task force that attempted to come up with a list of demands of amenities for the community.

Eventually the Rogers Road neighborhood association decided that "no transfer station" should be the only demand on the list.

Resistance was isolated at first, but by the coalition's first meeting in mid-August, the Orange County Democratic Party and Orange County branch of the NAACP were on board, Jones said.

Still, when residents attempted to talk about reopening the transfer station search, they met resistance.

"Finding another site for the transfer station was not part of the charge of this committee. It's unlikely we can stop now," commissioner Moses Carey, then chairman of the board, said in a Sept. 12 meeting of the task force.

Members of the coalition attended local government meetings, distributed literature and filed a complaint with the Department of Justice, arguing that the neighbor-

## What residents have said about the waste-transfer site debate:



Rev. Robert Campbell

"This is truly a grassroots, 'Rainbow' coalition that is seeking to make change long term."



Barbara Hopkins

"Who's better to tell about the neighborhood than the people who have been raised by it?"



Neloa Jones

"We have had to live with this landfill for 35 years, and it is time for us to stop carrying Orange County's burden."

hood should not continue to bear the burden of the county's waste.

But both Campbell and Hopkins said the turning point came after Jones' Sept. 20 speech at a packed meeting of local governments.

Jones described the meeting as a culmination of months of pressure from the community.

"I think they were surprised that we kept saying 'no,'" she said. Commissioner Mike Nelson was

the first commissioner to come out against the Rogers Road transfer station in October.

By early November, the board had decided to reopen the search.

Nelson said the board mismanaged the process and should have started a complete search right after they decided to build a site.

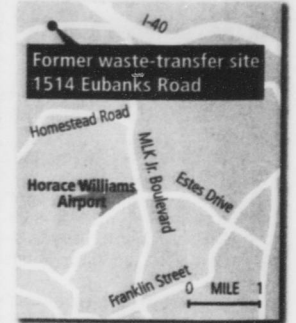
He said that he would like to see the Rogers Road site off the table but that the county is in danger of

running out of landfill space.

"There is a very real possibility that we are going to have a crisis in a couple years," Nelson said.

Jones said that if the commissioners do the next search by the book, they will find the Rogers Road site impractical.

Jones' house is separated from the landfill by just a thin line of trees. She said this is the first time she has been involved in local politics.



SOURCE: GOOGLE MAPS  
DTH/REBECCA ROLFE

"When you are impotent politically, economically disadvantaged, disenfranchised, I think governments, like Orange County, don't think they have to worry about much trouble," she said. "This time was different."

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